



COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

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March 1, 2000
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
The Portals, 445 Twelfth Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

**SUBJECT: EXTENSION OF DEADLINE FOR USE OF FUNDS IN PROGRAM
YEAR 2, UNIVERSAL SERVICE "E-RATE" PROGRAM - (CC
DOCKET NO. 96-45)**

Dear Ms. Salas:

The Council of Chief State School Officers is filing this letter in support of the appeal from the State of Illinois urging the Federal Communications Commission to extend the time frame that schools and libraries have to complete nonrecurring, internal connections support under the universal services program for this fiscal year.

In our letter to your office on January 7, 2000, we also urged the Commission to adjust the schedule for completing non-recurring services in year two of the universal services discounts for schools and libraries. We indicated: "the period of time for completing of approved projects for internal connections under second year funding be extended from June 30, 2000 to September 30, 2000. The experience of year one suggests that many districts cannot initiate internal connections projects during the school day and school year."

We reiterate the position earlier recommended and express our full support for the recent appeal from Glenn W. McGee, Illinois State Superintendent of Education, dated January 24, 2000. His letter requested an extension of the date for internal connections discounts and included a justification based on actual problems encountered by four public and private school applicants in the State of Illinois.

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Our support for the request originating from the State of Illinois is based on our polling representatives of a group of twenty-two states who participate in conference calls with our office on a regular basis. A consensus of the states' technology coordinators, whom we queried on this matter on a recent conference call, indicated that an extension of the deadline for completing internal connections commitments - from June 30, 2000 to September 30, 2000 - would be enormously helpful to their schools. Their personal knowledge of local school requirements, combined with the specific case studies cited in the Illinois appeal, should convince the Commission that the current deadline creates serious logistical and practical problems for completing internal classroom wiring projects while schools are in session. We should note that the June 30th deadline is particularly burdensome for rural schools which rely on small contractors that, typically, do not have sufficient manpower to meet the pressing schedules of multiple customers at peak work times.

In closing, we express our appreciation for the commitment of the Chairman and work by the Common Carrier Bureau to ensure the successful implementation of this program. A timely and sensible resolution of the problem associated with wiring school classrooms during the school-year will contribute immeasurably to strengthening the operation and ultimate success of this program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. M. Ambach", written over a horizontal line.

Gordon M. Ambach
Executive Director

Copies of the foregoing letter have been sent via messenger and/or first-class mail to the parties below:

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